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EDITORIAL COMMENT



FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

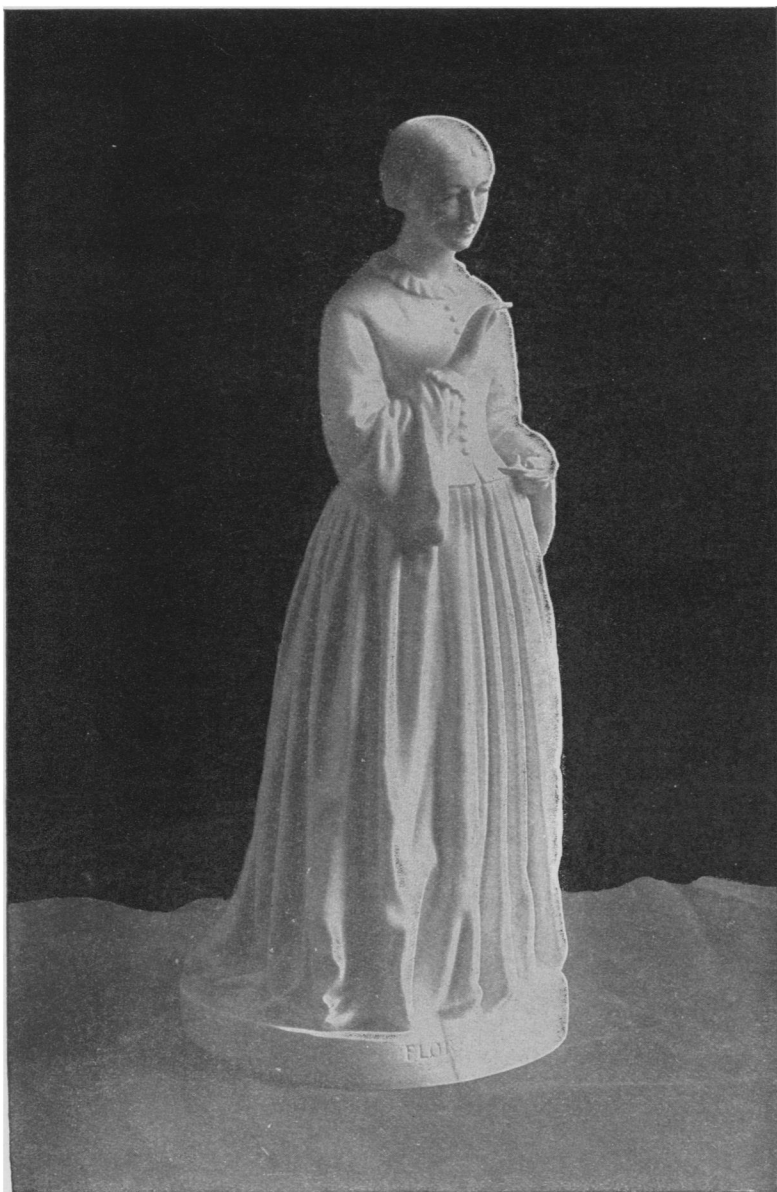
Born in Florence, Italy, May 12, 1820; died in London, England, August 13, 1910.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST NIGHTINGALE TRAINING SCHOOL.¹

ON the evening of the eighteenth of May, 1910, a great gathering took place at Carnegie Hall, New York, in honor of Florence Nightingale, and in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding by her of the first training school for nurses. This meeting was held under the auspices of the two national associations of nurses—the American Society of Superintendents of Training Schools, and the Nurses' Associated Alumnae—and all of the arrangements for the meeting were carried out by the joint committees of the two societies, of which the chairmen were respectively Miss Annie W. Goodrich, general superintendent of Training Schools of Bellevue and Allied Hospitals, and Miss Anna C. Maxwell, superintendent of nurses, Presbyterian Hospital. The original plan had been to hold the exercises in one of the halls of Columbia University, but certain events there conflicted with the date fixed for our conventions, and it became necessary to turn to Carnegie Hall as the only place large enough to accommodate those whom we desired to invite. The hall, which is very large, seating more than three thousand people, was attractively and appropriately decorated for the occasion with American, British, and German flags, and superb palms were massed upon and about the platform. A large British flag, draped about with black, hung at the back of the platform, a silent reminder of the recent death of the king of Miss Nightingale's country.

The floor of the hall was entirely occupied by the members of the two

¹The conception of the plan for this commemorative service was Miss Nutting's, then president of the Society of Superintendents.



FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

Statuette in the Johns Hopkins Training School. Reproduced from "A History of Nursing" through the courtesy of the authors, Miss Nutting and Miss Dock, and of the publishers, G. P. Putnam's Sons.

societies, while the boxes and balconies were filled with a brilliant audience of invited guests, consisting of many eminent men and women, and well-known representatives of education, philanthropy, and charity, while the remainder of the galleries were filled with many hundreds of students from the New York training schools.

On the platform were seated representatives of the boards of trustees of prominent hospitals, hospital superintendents, the officers of both nursing societies, and the speakers. The surpliced choir of St. George's Church occupied raised seats in the centre of the rear of the platform.

In arranging the programme, invitations to share in the exercises were sent to Honorable James Bryce, the English Ambassador, and to President Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia University. Both were prevented by other engagements for that date from accepting our invitation. In order that the profession of nursing might be fitly represented, Mrs. Hunter Robb was asked to give an address upon some nursing subject, but had not formally consented to do so when, by her sudden and tragic death, she was taken from us. It was not felt that anyone among us could take the place we had wished her to fill.

The programme of the meeting precisely as arranged is here presented, but owing to the illness of Bishop Greer, the Venerable Archdeacon Nelson made the opening prayer; and near the close the lateness of the hour caused a shortening of the musical part of the programme.

PROGRAMME

Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn of Columbia University, presiding. Organ voluntary: Prelude in A major (Smart), Andante from the 5th Symphony (Beethoven), Finale from the 6th Sonäta (Mendelssohn), Mr. Homer Norris. Hymn, "Love Divine, All Love Excelling," the choirs of St. George's Church and of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and the audience. Invocation, Rt. Rev. David H. Greer, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese of New York. Opening Address, Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn, of Columbia University. The Soldier Nurse, Col. John VanR. Hoff, Medical Corps, U. S. Army. Chorus, "Unfold Ye Portals," from "The Redemption" (Gounod). What Florence Nightingale Did for Mankind, The Hon. Joseph H. Choate. Song, "The King of Love my Shepherd is," Mr. Burleigh. The Influence of the Trained Nurse upon Developments in Medicine, Dr. William Polk, Dean of Medical School, Cornell University. Hymn, "Thou, Whose Almighty Word." Benediction, The Rt. Rev. Monsignor Lavelle, representing the Archbishop of New York. Recessional, Marche Solennelle (Mailly).

An answer to the message sent to Miss Nightingale at the meeting was received after the meetings were over, addressed to the Associated Nurses' Societies, in care of the president of the Society of Superintendents, thanking the Associated Nurses of America on Miss Nightingale's behalf for their very kind message of affection and signed by Miss Nightingale's secretary; and at a later date Miss Nightingale's cousin, Henry Bonham-Carter, Esquire, wrote a personal letter, saying how greatly he regretted that owing to an oversight, no message of sympathy from Miss Nightingale's family was received on the evening of the commemoration.

As one after another of the speakers took up that special portion of Miss Nightingale's life and work which he desired to illuminate and interpret, there was finally built up and projected upon the canvas a figure of the most noble and heroic mold and proportions, and reverence and devotion grew with the passing moments. Those who were present felt it to be one of those great and uplifting events which can neither be adequately described nor ever forgotten. M. A. N.

MISS NIGHTINGALE'S WRITINGS AND THE MODERN NURSE

The influence of Miss Nightingale's writings upon the education of the modern nurse is a subject which would richly repay the inquiring mind, did the leisure, often out of reach in modern life, permit of the intellectual excursion necessary to a careful study of the remarkable writings of that remarkable woman; for without such careful study the intimate though unseen relation between the two will be lost. We can recommend no better occupation for the nurse who may be temporarily laid aside than to make this thorough study in a loving and responsive spirit—her outlook will be enormously widened.

Perhaps in actual training-school study courses this influence is least observed, for Miss Nightingale, in establishing St. Thomas's school, was evidently satisfied to begin with an elementary standard of education as regards that learned from books, and in her day what is now known as the "laboratory method" of teaching; in other words, the careful demonstration to beginners of things they must learn to do, was not developed as it is now. The actual course of study at St. Thomas's for at least a good many years was no more difficult or complicated than that at Bellevue in the seventies. For the nurse in training Miss Nightingale insisted on the most perfect possible kind of "apprentice" teaching, and above all on the development of what our New Englanders call "faculty," which is simply a development from within of all the faculties and a perfection through practice of all procedures.

Yet in spite of the ideal results from good apprenticeship, the pace of modern life and the growing vastness of hospitals have made it necessary to add other methods of teaching, for one master can only teach a few apprentices. In our opinion, the advances that have been made in training schools as to study extension have been largely original, not to any great extent derived directly from Miss Nightingale's counsels. Yet in a large way all the great movements which underlie the necessity for broader teaching have owed enormously to her. Such, for instance, is the modern sanitary movement, embracing as it does the most diverse and fundamental things: the housing of the poor, rural hygiene, milk supply, domestic sanitation and wholesome cookery,—these things in turn demanding trained teachers, nurse teachers and social service nurses. We are confident that Miss Nightingale's influence and the effect of her writings upon nurses' education show largest and most brilliantly in all the lines of what she has called "health nursing," or the maintenance of health as over and against the actual nursing of disease. This is because, on lines like this, she was a true seer or prophet, forecasting the future, perceiving the solution of many miseries in the wonderful vision of prevention.

Study of her writings shows that to-day the nurses who are fulfilling her most heartfelt desires are those in the milk stations, in the inspectors' posts, in the house-to-house educational campaign, in the shops and factories, in the visiting nursing service, in the constructive social work which aims at keeping people well and at proclaiming loudly the defects of social structure which tend to make them ill.

Another field wherein her influence has been marked and extensive has been that of military nursing and the improvement of army hospital management.

It is a little curious, but quite evident from her writings, that private nursing was to her the field of least interest. She speaks of it always, as it were, in passing, but sometimes seems even to grudge giving nurses to it. It was to her full of pitfalls and tendencies that led nurses away from their highest ideals. True, her "Notes on Nursing" is the most perfect text-book that a private duty nurse can possess, yet one does not find in her writings any absorption in the special problems of private nursing as such. This was, no doubt, partly due to the lines of caste prevalent in her day. Her whole message to the nurse is to be a *teacher* as well as a nurse. To summarize in a few words, it seems likely that the large social developments of nursing will be those that feel longest and most vividly the impression of Miss Nightingale's genius. L. L. D.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE AND ARMY NURSING

All ages have experienced the horrors of warfare and in all ages women have shared in the care of the wounded upon the field of battle. Even in remote antiquity we are told Agrippina, the wife of the great Roman soldier, Germanicus, went among the sick and wounded distributing medicines and clothes.

It was not, however, until the Crimean War that Government officials realized the possibility of a woman's taking part in the broader work of organization and administration.

The need of the British Army in the Crimea was great. The Government had failed to provide even absolute necessities for the care of the sick and wounded.

Into the chaos of this suffering and discontent, on a bleak November day, came Florence Nightingale, with her band of nurses; a woman possessed of a firm will, a rare gift of leadership, of warm sympathy, and combined with all these personal qualities, scientific knowledge acquired during many years of study and experience.

Impatient of unnecessary delays she stormed storehouses and carried away the sorely-needed supplies, reckless of injury to Governmental red tape. In the organization and supervision of these army hospitals she instituted such improvements in sanitation and hygiene that the death-rate was reduced in a few months from 60 per cent. to 1 per cent., and the hospitals became models of neatness and order. Not satisfied even with these results she declared after the close of the war that, in her opinion, the mortality of army hospitals could be reduced to one-half of what it was even in times of peace at home.

On the evacuation of Turkey by the British, July 28, 1856, she returned to England broken in health, but with a dauntless spirit which failed not through a long life of usefulness.

It is impossible, as yet, to correctly estimate the far-reaching influence of her life and teachings. Her theories in regard to hospital construction, sanitation, and nursing were revolutionary, but it must be acknowledged that all subsequent improvements and achievements along these lines have been largely due to her clear intuition and to the impetus of her example.

Three years after the Crimean War came the Battle of Solferino, leaving forty thousand soldiers dead or wounded on the field, and still another army was found to be unprepared to care for the victims of war. A wave of pity swept over Europe and in 1863 the International Red

Cross was established, with Florence Nightingale as one of its founders, thus extending her influence over the whole civilized world.

In 1863 a report of the sanitary condition of the British Army in India was submitted to her for criticism and suggestions. Her notes were published with the report, and her recommendations brought about not only sanitary improvements in the army, but in the towns of India as well.

Soon after the outbreak of our own Civil War and inspired by the work of Miss Nightingale in the Crimea, a great concourse of women assembled in Cooper Institute, New York City, and a movement was instituted which led to the organization of a Sanitary Commission. Her work was well known to the members of this commission, for, to use their own words, they wished to have a system "founded upon the same principles and administered by a commission similar to that whose labors had produced such happy results in the Crimea," and Miss Nightingale's advice was eagerly sought in all matters relating to military nursing.

One of the objects of the Sanitary Commission was to provide nurses in aid of the Medical Staff, and it seems only natural that the great need of capable and trained nurses during the four long years of the war should have led to the establishment of training schools in this country.

Even as Florence Nightingale, returning from the Crimea, used the offering of a grateful people to establish a School for Nurses, so our own women, when relieved of the terrible anxieties of war, turned their thoughts toward providing suitable instruction for those who should desire to become nurses. As a result, training schools for nurses in this country were established. The principles formulated by Miss Nightingale were closely followed, and one of her own graduates, Sister Helen, came from England to act as the superintendent of the training school at Bellevue Hospital. Training schools in rapid succession were established in this country and in England, so that in 1898, when war was declared with Spain, there were thousands of properly trained nurses available for service, and about two thousand were assigned to military hospitals and hospital ships. This was the first time in the history of the world that a large body of regularly trained nurses was called upon for service in time of war, and although the story of their unselfish devotion to duty may never be written, we feel sure that deep in the hearts of grateful soldiers are recorded many deeds of mercy, worthy of our beloved teacher, Florence Nightingale.

Close upon this came the Boer War, in South Africa, and once more the value of nurses in military hospitals was clearly demonstrated.

It but remained for this country and England to place upon a permanent basis the nursing service of their respective armies. This was done by the establishment, soon after the close of the Boer War of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, by the formation, in 1901, of the United States Army Nurse Corps, and the Nurse Corps, United States Navy, in 1908. Canada soon followed, and all armies in civilized countries have now a permanent nursing service, either as part of the army organization or as a branch of the Red Cross.

J. A. D.

THE INFLUENCE OF HER LIFE

In reading Miss Nightingale's letter to Miss Scovil of May, 1897, when she must have been about 77 years of age, one is struck with the last paragraph in which she says, "and now work increasing every month and every year, I have not (and have not had) five minutes' leisure to myself to finish this note."

We wonder what the work was to which she referred and how all the long days of those shut-in years were spent. Her writings, as recorded in the bibliography circulated last May, were not voluminous, and were mostly in the form of letters and addresses, at the rate of one or two a year, with occasional lapses of several years. Miss Richards, in her article "Recollections of a Pioneer Nurse,"² in speaking of her visit to Miss Nightingale's home in London in 1877, makes the statement that she never saw her in any position but lying on a bed, and Miss Scovil calls attention to the same fact. That she was a great reader, is shown in her comment on most current medical literature in her second letter to Miss Scovil. We hope that her executors are going to give us a more enlightening record of her personal life than has yet been published.

Miss Nightingale's whole life, from her girlhood up, was that of a philanthropist. Her attitude toward nursing problems was that of a philanthropist more than that of a practical teacher of a training school. She never knew the meaning of financial necessity, and for that reason, perhaps, could not sympathize fully with those developments that have led to the organized effort of nurses over the world to obtain some system of registration which would ultimately lead to the regulation of nursing education and practice.

In summing up the influence of her life, we have to remember that Miss Nightingale did her practical work at a time when medical science

² AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING for January, 1903.

was at a stand-still. There were hospitals, but care was lacking. Naturally her efforts were concentrated upon the immediate need at hand, which was manual dexterity, combined with intelligence, honesty, and implicit obedience to the physician,—the fundamental principles of nursing; but her writings show that if she had continued as a practical worker she would have been foremost in all the progressive movements that call for a higher order of intellectual attainment for the modern nurse, which is the direct result of the progress of medical science and the demands of society.

All the efforts for the higher education of the nurse, the world over, are but the result of Miss Nightingale's life and example,—the watchword of which was preparedness. So, as her faithful followers, we must keep ever in advance of the common demand and, as has ever been the fate of those who have followed her in pioneer work, we must continue to expect opposition and criticism. Our inspiration must be in the far-reaching and wonderful influence of her life, as demonstrated in the ever-lengthening chain of nursing activities; in hospitals and homes, in the army and navy, in the mission field, in all forms of social work, link added to link, stretching around the world.

Florence Nightingale died August 13, 1910, aged ninety years, the world's greatest nurse, the world's greatest philanthropist.³

³ Illustrations of Florence Nightingale's last resting place are to be found in the *JOURNAL* for October, 1910.

